

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TAIPEI 02391 01 OF 03 181017Z  
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
AID-05 IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /085 W  
-----055412 181104Z /11

R 180950Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7131  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
AMEMBASSY MANILA  
USLO PEKING  
AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TAIPEI 02391

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS : PINT, TW  
SUBJECT : DOMESTIC POLITICS: THE NEW SCENE

REF: (A) TAIPEI 2037 (NOTAL), (B) TAIPEI 2125 (NOTAL),  
(C) 77 TAIPEI 7267 (NDTAL), (D) TAIPEI 1068 (NOTAL),  
(E) TAIPEI 1383 (NOTAL), (F) TAIPEI 1749 (NOTAL),  
(G) TAIPEI 1616 (NOTAL), (H) TAIPEI 1782 (NOTAL),  
(I) TAIPEI 1837 (NOTAL)

### 1. A NEW SITUATION IN TAIWAN

SINCE THE SUMMER OF 1977, THERE HAVE BEEN SPONTANEOUS  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TAIPEI 02391 01 OF 03 181017Z

AND UNCOORDINATED DEVELOPMENTS WHICH INDICATE A NEW  
STIRRING IN TAIWAN'S LONG-STAGNANT DOMESTIC POLITICAL  
LIFE. AMONG THEM ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT WAS SET  
IN MOTION LAST AUGUST WHERE THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH'S  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ISSUED A "DECLARATION ON HUMAN  
RIGHTS" WHICH CALLED ON THE GROC "TO FACE REALITY AND  
TO TAKE EFFECTIVE MEASURES WHEREBY TAIWAN MAY BECOME A

NEW AND INDEPENDENT COUNTRY." WE STRONGLY DOUBT THAT THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WOULD HAVE PUBLICLY TAKEN THIS AUDACIOUS STAND WITHOUT A CONVICTION THAT IT ACCURATELY REFLECTED THE FEELINGS OF MOST OF ITS 160,000 MEMBERS. THIS WAS FORMALLY CONFIRMED BY SUBSEQUENT RATIFICATION OF THE DECLARATION BY AT LEAST SOME LOCAL PRESBYTERIES AND BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARCH 28-31, 1978 (SEE REFS A AND B).

2. THE SAME DISSATISFACTION WITH THE CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE AND THE GOVERNMENT'S RHETORIC WAS EVIDENT IN THE VICTORIES OF AN UNEXPECTEDLY LARGE NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT POLITICIANS IN THE NOVEMBER 1977 LOCAL ELECTIONS (SEE REFS C THROUGH F). ALTHOUGH THE ISSUE OF AN "INDEPENDENT TAIWAN" WAS NOT TO OUR KNOWLEDGE EXPLICITLY RAISED DURING THE CAMPAIGNS, WE ARE CONVINCED THAT A GENERAL, UNDEFINED SYMPATHY FOR SELF-DETERMINATION, ALONG WITH MORE EXPLICIT DISSATISFACTION WITH THE LOCAL KMT ESTABLISHMENT, CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO INDEPENDENT SUCCESSES.

3. THE RECENT ANIMATION OF LOCAL POLITICAL LIFE HAS BEEN ERRATICALLY REFLECTED IN A SLIGHTLY MORE OPEN PRESS. IN PARTICULAR, WE ARE STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT THE LONG-TABOO SUBJECT OF INDEPENDENCE HAS BEEN OPENLY DISCUSSED IN PRINT, ALBEIT CRITICALLY. AT THE SAME TIME, IN OTHER CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TAIPEI 02391 01 OF 03 181017Z

WAYS THE GROG HAS MOVED SELECTIVELY AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREATER FREEDOM OF PRESS, CLOSING AT LEAST ONE MAGAZINE, CONFISCATING A BOOK ON LAST NOVEMBER'S LOCAL ELECTIONS, AND BANNING PUBLICATION OF NEW MAGAZINES FOR ONE YEAR (REFS G THROUGH I).

4. SINCE LAST FALL, INDEPENDENT POLITICIANS HAVE MOVED CAUTIOUSLY TO CONSOLIDATE LOCAL POWER THROUGH THEIR NEW OFFICES (21 OUT OF 77 IN PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY; 2 AS MAGISTRATES; 2 AS MAYORS). THEIR MAJOR EMPHASIS, AS ILLUSTRATED BY THEIR CONCERN WITH CONSTITUENT SERVICES, HAS APPEARED TO BE ON THE ONE COMMON THEME THAT RAN THROUGH THEIR UNCOORDINATED CAMPAIGNS: THAT GOVERNMENT ON TAIWAN SHOULD BE MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE PEOPLE ON TAIWAN. THEY HAVE TRIED TO INCREASE CONTACTS WITH FELLOW INDEPENDENTS -- THE MORE IMPORTANT ONES HAVE LONG BEEN KNOWN TO ONE ANOTHER -- BUT HAVE GENERALLY AGREED WITH PROMINENT INDEPENDENT LEGISLATOR K'ANG NING-HSIANG THAT THEY SHOULD AVOID PROVOKING THE AUTHORITIES, AND PARTICULARLY TO MOVE SLOWLY AND CAUTIOUSLY TOWARD CREATING A FORMAL OPPOSITION PARTY.

5. THE BOLDNESS OF THE PRESBYTERIANS IN ISSUING AND

DEFENDING THEIR WELL-PUBLICIZED DECLARATION HAS BEEN  
ADMIRE BY INDEPENDENT POLITICIANS, MANY OF WHOM THINK  
THE CHURCH HAS RUSHED IN WHERE THEY HAVE FEARED TO  
TREAD, AND HAS ILLUSTRATED, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING,  
THAT THE AREA OF POSSIBLE POLITICAL ACTIVITY CAN BE  
ENLARGED WITHOUT NECESSARILY PROVOKING THE TRADITIONAL  
CRACKDOWN (ALTHOUGH IT MAY TURN OUT THAT THIS JUDGMENT  
IS PREMATURE). THIS WILL PROBABLY ENCOURAGE  
INDEPENDENT POLITICIANS TO BE SOMEWHAT LESS CAUTIOUS  
THAN THEY HAVE BEEN. K'ANG, THE MOST INFLUENTIAL OF

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TAIPEI 02391 02 OF 03 181055Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

AID-05 IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /085 W

-----055782 181104Z /14

R 180950Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7132

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 TAIPEI 02391

THE ACTIVE INDEPENDENTS, HAS BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH  
THE PRESBYTERIANS, AND CLAIMS TO BE TRYING TO  
ESTABLISH AN INFORMAL COALITION OF CHURCH GROUPS,  
INDEPENDENT POLITICIANS, AND STUDENTS. (THE LATTER HAVE  
BEEN TRADITIONALLY POLITICALLY INERT, BUT, ACCORDING  
TO MANY INDEPENDENTS, ARE BECOMING MUCH MORE INTERESTED  
IN POLITICS.) THE GROC, SENSITIVE TO THIS POSSIBILITY,  
HAS WARNED THE CHURCH NOT TO HAVE CONTACT WITH  
INDEPENDENT POLITICIANS. SHOULD SUCH A COALITION TAKE  
SHAPE -- TRADITIONAL CHINESE FACTIOUSNEBE MAKES THAT  
PROBLEMATIC -- WE WOULD HAVE TO ADVANCE THE DATE BY

WHICH WE WOULD EXPECT SIGNIFICANT NON-KMT POLITICAL  
INFLUENCE TO BE FELT AT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL.

6. IN ANY EVENT, A VOLATILE DOMESTIC POLITICAL  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TAIPEI 02391 02 OF 03 181055Z

SITUATION IS DEVELOPING ON TAIWAN AND, ALTHOUGH BOTH  
THE AUTHORITIES AND OPPOSITIONISTS HAVE SO FAR  
SUCCESSFULLY SOUGHT TO AVOID OPEN CONFLICT, THEIR  
SPARRING COULD PRODUCE A MORE DRAMATIC CONFRONTATION  
AT VIRTUALLY ANY TIME. THE WAY IN WHICH BOTH OF THEM  
PREPARE FOR THE DECEMBER SUPPLEMENTAL ELECTIONS TO  
THE CENTRAL PARLIAMENTARY BODIES WILL GIVE US A MORE  
SOLID BASE FROM WHICH TO SPECULATE ON THE TIMING AND  
NATURE OF THESE NEW POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

7. WHAT DO THE INDEPENDENTS WANT?

INEVITABLY IN LOOSELY ORGANIZED MOVEMENTS SUCH AS THIS THERE ARE  
DIFFERENCES IN VIEW. NEVERTHELESS THE NON-PARTY LEADERS WE HAVE  
TALKED WITH, INCLUDING SEVERAL OF THE NEWLY ELECTED GROUP, SHARE  
SOME BASIC GOALS AND ATTITUDES. WHILE IT MAY SEEM A DISTINCTION  
WITHOUT A DIFFERENCE, THEY DISASSOCIATE THEMSELVES FROM THE  
TAIWAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT (TIM) AND ASSERT THAT THEIR "POLITICAL  
REFORM MOVEMENT" ADVOCATES NOT INDEPENDENCE BUT SELF-DETERMINATION.  
THIS STANCE IS LARGELY TACTICAL - NO ONE WITH POLITICAL AMBITIONS  
WANTS TO BE TARRED WITH THE BRUSH OF THE DISCREDITED TIM OR RISK  
JAIL ON A CHARGE OF OPENLY ADVOCATING INDEPENDENCE - BUT IT ALSO  
REPRESENTS A LONGER-RANGE VIEW OF THE PROBLEM OF THE STATUS OF  
TAIWAN AND, UNLIKE THE TIM APPROACH, AT LEAST LEAVES OPEN THE  
POSSIBILITY OF MAINLANDER-TAIWANESE COOPERATION. WHILE NO ONE CAN  
CLAIM TO SPEAK FOR THE WHOLE MOVEMENT, INFLUENTIAL LEADERS OF IT  
SAY THEY ARE THINKING IN TERMS OF A LONG-TERM (TEN YEARS IS OFTEN  
MENTIONED) PERIOD OF POLITICAL EVOLUTION ON THE  
ISLAND WHICH WOULD ALSO INVOLVE CHANGES IN THE KMT ITSELF. DURING  
THAT PERIOD, THESE SOURCES MAINTAIN THE RETURN TO THE MAINLAND  
RHETORIC WOULD BE DROPPED BUT THERE WOULD BE NO NEED TO CHANGE  
THE NAME "ROC" OR FORMALLY TO ASSERT A SEPARATE STATUS FROM CHINA.  
SUCH CHANGES, WHICH ARE THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE MOVEMENT,  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TAIPEI 02391 02 OF 03 181055Z

WOULD TAKE PLACE EVEN FARTHER INTO THE FUTURE AND AT LEAST ACCORD-  
ING TO SOME OF THE LEADERS, ANY FORMAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE  
WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF TALKS BETWEEN THE PRC AND WHAT  
WOULD THEN BE A NEW TAIWANESE AND PROBABLY NON-KMT LEADERSHIP.  
IN THE MEANTIME, THE MOVEMENT'S LEADERS SAY THAT FROM THEIR POINT

OF VIEW THERE NEED BE NO OPEN SPLIT BETWEEN THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT AND THE MOVEMENT "AS LONG AS THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT MEAN IT WHEN IT SAYS IT WILL RETURN TO THE MAINLAND."

#### 8. GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE

DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ON HOW TO COPE WITH THESE NEW POLITICAL STIRRINGS ARE ALONG PREDICTABLE LINES WITH THE SECURITY APPARATUS GENERALLY URGING CRACKDOWN AND THE MORE POLITICALLY ASTUTE, INCLUDING THE PRESIDENT-ELECT, APPARENTLY ADVOCATING CONTINUATION OF THE POLICY WE HAVE NOTED OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS OF AVOIDING CONFRONTATIONS AND SEEKING TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE TO COOPT THE MOVEMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, OF COURSE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS HEIGHTENED ITS VIGILANCE AND PRESUMABLY STEPPED UP EFFORTS TO INFILTRATE THE MOVEMENT. THEY HAVE ALSO INSTRUCTED THE PRESS NOT TO REPORT ON THE INDEPENDENTS EVEN CRITICALLY TO ENSURE THEIR GETTING MINIMUM PUBLICITY. IF ANY OF THE MOVEMENT'S LEADERS CLEARLY STEP OUT OF LINE, THE GOVERNMENT MAY DECIDE IT HAS TO MOVE AGAINST THEM, BUT SUCH ACTION SEEMS UNLIKELY AT THIS STAGE. THE DEFINITION OF "OUT OF LINE" IS, OF COURSE, VAGUE AT BEST AND CHANGES OVER TIME. THE GOVERNMENT APPROACH FOR THE TIME BEING SEEMS TO BE A COMBINATION OF ADMONISHING THE MOVEMENT'S LEADERS TO BE CAREFUL THEY DO NOT UNWITTINGLY PLAY INTO THE HAND OF THE PRC AND OF SELECTIVELY SEEKING TO DISCREDIT THOSE WHO GO TOO FAR.

#### 9. CONCLUSION

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TAIPEI 02391 03 OF 03 181030Z  
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
AID-05 IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /085 W  
-----055529 181105Z /11

R 180950Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TAIPEI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7133  
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
AMEMBASSY MANILA  
USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 TAIPEI 02391

THE DANGER IN THE SITUATION LIES IN THE ATTITUDE THAT SEEMS TO BE GAINING CURRENCY AMONG THE MOVEMENT'S LEADERS THAT WHENEVER ANY GROUP STAKES OUT NEW GROUND, AS THE PRESBYTERIANS HAVE DONE WITH THEIR DECLARATION, AND THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT CRACK DOWN, THE ENTIRE MOVEMENT CAN THEN ASSUME THAT IS SAFE GROUND. IF THE MOVEMENT REALLY ACTS ON THAT QUESTIONABLE ASSUMPTION, THE CHANCES OF A CONFRONTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT INCREASE MARKEDLY. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MOVEMENT IS CONTENT TO MOVE CAUTIOUSLY, ASSESSING CAREFULLY PROBABLE GOVERNMENT REACTION BEFORE ACTING, WE BELIEVE THE MOVEMENT COULD FIND ADEQUATE ROOM FOR MANEUVER AND EXPANSION OF ITS INFLUENCE FOR PERHAPS ANOTHER FOUR TO FIVE YEARS BEFORE EITHER THE MOVEMENT WOULD EXPERIENCE FRUSTRATION OR THE GOVERNMENT WOULD FEEL SO THREATENED IT DECIDED IT HAD TO CRACKDOWN. THE INDEPENDENCE QUESTION, OF COURSE, REPRESENTS NOT ONLY AN ISSUE WHICH COULD PRECIPITATE POLITICAL CONFRONTATION  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TAIPEI 02391 03 OF 03 181030Z

IN TAIWAN AND A POSSIBLE RESURGENCE OF INTERNAL TENSIONS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN PART OF THE LOCAL SCENE FOR OVER 20 YEARS, BUT IT ALSO RAISES THE SPECTER OF STRESSES AND STRAINS WITH WIDER INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS, POSSIBLY INCLUDING AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE ON US-PRC RELATIONS. HOW OUR NORMALIZATION POLICY IMPACTS ON THE POLITICAL DYNAMICS HERE (AND HOW THE MOVEMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT PERCEIVE ITS IMPACT) WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF A SEPARATE MESSAGE. UNGER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** GOVERNMENT REFORM, POLITICAL SITUATION, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 18 apr 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1978TAIPEI02391  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D780165-0729  
**Format:** TEL  
**From:** TAIPEI  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1978/newtext/t19780443/aaaabkaz.tel  
**Line Count:** 314  
**Litigation Code IDs:**  
**Litigation Codes:**  
**Litigation History:**  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Message ID:** ec9f8bab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 6  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 78 TAIPEI 2037, 78 TAIPEI 7267, 78 TAIPEI 1068, 78 TAIPEI 1383, 78 TAIPEI 1749  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 28 apr 2005  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2926708  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** DOMESTIC POLITICS: THE NEW SCENE  
**TAGS:** PINT, TW  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**vdkgvwkey:** odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS\_Docs/ec9f8bab-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014